

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:159
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2005
PROTECTION OF WETLANDS
Mahtab Shri Bhartruhari

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether population of fresh water species has declined faster between 1970 and 2000;
- (b) if so, the steps being taken to protect the wetland eco-systems of the country;
- (c) whether over exploitation of resources, reclamation projects, pollution and degradation of catchments are major threats to wetlands in the country;
- (d) if so, whether the Government proposes to appoint adequate law-enforcing agencies there to protect the environment; and
- (e) if so, details thereof ?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA)

(a) to (e) : A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION 159 DUE FOR REPLY ON 14.3.2005 REGARDING PROTECTION OF WETLANDS BY SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB

(a) & (b) : In the absence of specific studies in this regard, the comparative data on the extent and pace of decline, if any, in fresh water species is not readily available. However, there are reports of marginal decline in population of some species.

Under the National Wetland Conservation Programme, 66 wetlands located in 21 States have been identified in the country so far for grant of assistance for activities like catchment area treatment, biodiversity conservation, sustainable fisheries development, vegetative measures, desilting, weed control, soil conservation, education & awareness, and community participation. Besides this, under the Centrally sponsored scheme namely Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries, financial assistance is also being provided for conservation of a number of wetlands brought under the Protected Area Network.

(c) : Besides over-exploitation of resources, reclamation projects, pollution and degradation of catchments, the major threats to wetlands in the country also include drought, changes in rainfall pattern and encroachments.

(d) & (e) : Regulatory provisions already exist in several legislative instruments, namely, the Indian Forest Act, 1927, the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess Act, 1977, and the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 to protect the environment including the wetlands. These provisions confer powers on the designated law-enforcing agencies of the State Governments and UT Administrations.